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ABSTRACT

Computer tape files of student enrollment data were analyzed three times in an 18-month period to determine the effects of closing five of Seattle's elementary schools in May 1979 on the enrollments of students residing within those attendance boundaries. The changes in enrollment figures in the areas where schools were closed were compared to changes in selected neighborhoods outside the closed school attendance areas deemed similar in character and to changes in the district as a whole. In addition, the changes in enrollment were compared to those in nondesegregated school neighborhoods and to those directly involved in desegregation. The author concluded that no substantial evidence was found in the study to indicate that school closure necessarily causes enrollment decline in the affected neighborhoods. (Author/WD)

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THE EFFECTS OF CLOSING FIVE SCHOOLS IN 1979 on SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENTS

Prepared by Larry Collister
School District Demographer

November 1980

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The Effects of Closing Five Schools in 1979 on School District Enrollments

Prepared by Larry Collister,
School District Demographer

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the effects of closing five schools in May 1979 on School District enrollments among students whose home addresses are or were within the attendance boundaries of the closed schools.

Background

In May 1979, the Seattle School Board voted to close five elementary schools, the closure to become effective in September, 1979. Those schools were: Crown Hill, Haller Lake, Jefferson, Maple Leaf, and Webster. The action to close came one year after the establishment of The Seattle Plan to desegregate the schools. The Seattle Plan was adopted in February 1978, to be effective in September 1978. That plan has been widely discussed in the community and in the press. Many persons hold the view that desegregation was a direct cause of some of the enrollment decline experienced in the District. Expert witnesses argued many aspects of that question in the litigation challenging the constitutionality of Initiative 350 in the United States District Court in Seattle during the Spring of 1979.

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that desegregation might contribute substantially to enrollment changes.

None of the closed schools had been included in The Seattle Plan. However, after the closure, some students were assigned to schools involved in desegregation. For example, Haller Lake students assigned to Northgate joined the Northgate-Graham Hill pair. (Northgate and Graham Hill operate as a pair, where kindergarten students remain at the neighborhood school, grades 1-3 receive instruction at Graham Hill, while grades 4-6 receive instruction at Northgate). Similarly, some Maple Leaf students were assigned to Rogers-Madrona, while others were assigned to Wedgwood/Decatur-Leschi. Some Jefferson students were assigned to Gatewood (paired with Van Asselt); or to Schmitz Park (paired with Beacon Hill), or to Genessee Hill (also paired with Beacon Hill).

The previous paragraph outlined the changes experienced or anticipated by K-6 students who lived in the closure neighborhoods. In grades 7-12, students received new "feeder table assignments" when the elementary schools were closed, since all assignments to schools are based on the

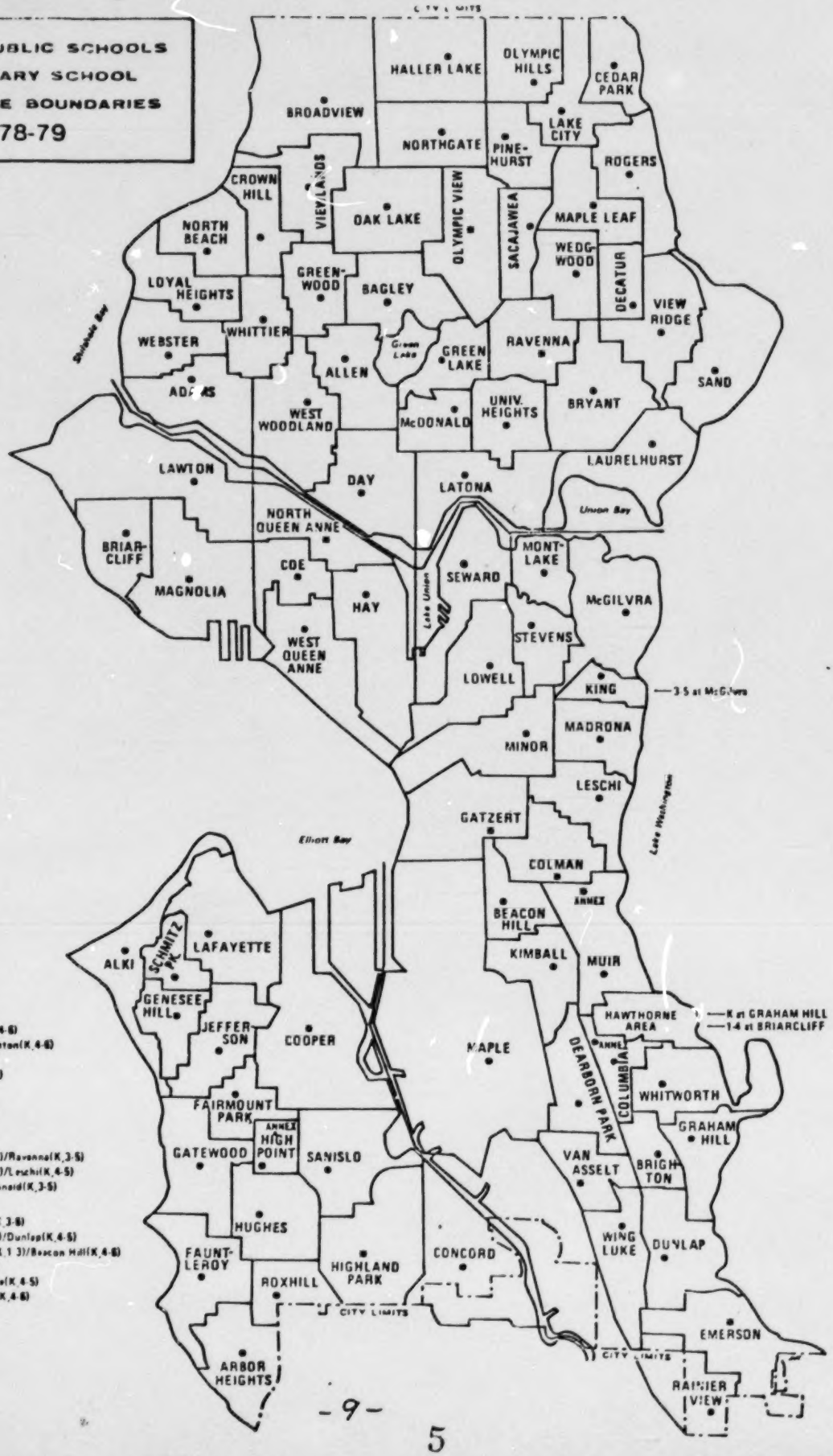
student's home address, relative to a neighborhood elementary school. Some of the new assignments in grades 7-12 involved crosstown bussing. Students living in the Haller Lake area, for example, were now assigned to Franklin, where the school had been Ingraham. Maple Leaf area students who were assigned to Wedgwood or Decatur, would attend Eckstein rather than Adams, and Garfield, rather than Hale. Jefferson area students (grades 7-12) were assigned in many different directions. Those assigned to Schmitz Park would now attend Cleveland, where the previous expectation had been West Seattle. The Jefferson component assigned to Gatewood would go to Denny (not Madison), while the Lafayette component would attend Mercer (not Madison). Those assigned from Jefferson to Fairmount Park would now go to Boren and Rainier Beach (not Madison and not West Seattle).

In many cases, as noted above, there was considerable desegregation involvment as a result of closure. In other cases, (Crown Hill and Webster) there was no desegregation involvement as a result of the closure.

Design

Comparisons of School District enrollments were based on observations taken at three points in time: (1) May 1979, (2) April 1980, and (3) October 1980. These dates were chosen since computer tape files of student enrollment were available for those dates, and because those dates represented (respectively): (1) the enrollment of the District at the time the closure decision was taken, but before the effects of closure were seen; (2) the enrollment of the District one year after the closure decision; and (3) the enrollment of the District at the beginning of the second year of closure.

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES
1978-79



Pairs/Triads:

ZONE I

Graham Hill(K,1-3)/Northgate(K,4-6)
Hoyt(K,1-3)/West Oak(K,1-3)/Brighton(K,4-6)
Muir(K,1-3)/Broadview(K,4-6)
Oak Lake(K,1-3)/Columbia(K,4-6)
Briarcliff(K,1-4)/Hawthorne
Blaine(5-6)/Hawthorne

ZONE II

Bryant(K,1-2)/Minor(K,3-5)
Colman(K,1-2)/Green Lake(K,3-5)/Ravenna(K,3-5)
Decatur(K,1-3)/Wedgwood(K,1-3)/Leschi(K,4-5)
Gatzert(K,1-2)/Day(K,3-5)/McDonald(K,3-5)

ZONE III

Magnolia(K,1-3)/Dearborn Park(K,3-6)
Fountaleroy(K,1-3)/Roxhill(K,1-3)/Dunlap(K,4-5)
Genesee Hill(K,1-3)/Schmitz Pk(K,1-3)/Beacon Hill(K,4-6)
High Point(K,1-2)/Hughes(K,3-5)
Highland Park(K,1-3,6)/Wing Luke(K,4-5)
Van Asselt(K,1-3)/Arbor Heights(K,4-6)

Pairs/Triads: Rev. 28 Mar 1978
Boundaries: Rev. April 1978

In this discussion, "base year" will refer to the data from May 1979; "year one" will refer to data from the April 1980 tape, and "year two" will refer to data from the October 1980 file.

Although the District attendance boundaries were changed since May 1979, tape files of student enrollment for year one, and for year two, were created showing students "assigned" to their nearest elementary school according to the boundaries in existence in May 1979, prior to closing the five schools. The map shows the Seattle Public Schools Elementary School Attendance Boundaries for 1978-79. Every student, kindergarten through 12th grade, lives within one of these attendance areas.*

Research Question

This study sought to analyze the effects of closing schools within five of these areas, by showing how the changes of numbers of students, kindergarten through twelfth grade, compared with changes that occurred in selected neighborhoods that were seen to be similar to the closed school neighborhood, and finally to compare changes in the student enrollments in the closure neighborhoods with enrollments in the District as a whole.

Because of the effects on enrollments which could be anticipated as a result of desegregation, schools were selected with a view to making two comparisons with the closed school neighborhods. One comparison would contrast the enrollment changes at a closed school neighborhood with "non deseg" school neighborhood: a school in the same vicinity, but where there was no immediate involvement in desegregation. The other comparison would display enrollment changes at a closed school neighborhood with neighborhoods where the schools were directly involved with desegregation. Finally, enrollments in a closed school neighborhood were compared with city-wide enrollments.

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* Each student record on each of the three tape files used in this study codes the elementary attendance area for this map directly from the student's home address.

A list of the closed schools is given below, along with a list of the comparison schools that were selected for the study.

Closure School	Comparison Schools	
	Non Deseg	Deseg
Crown Hill	Loyal Heights Viewlands	Broadview Oak Lake
Haller Lake	Pinehurst Sacajawea	Northgate Olympic Hills
Jefferson	Lafayette Fairmount Park	Gatewood Schmitz Park Genesee Hill
Maple Leaf	Sacajawea View Ridge	Rogers Wedgwood Decatur
Webster	Adams Loyal Heights	West Woodland Broadview

In order to consider as many facets of the question as possible, separate comparisons were made of enrollments, kindergarten through grade six (K-6), and kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12). These comparisons were completed and the enrollment tables were tested by chi-square statistical tests.

Tables

The tables that immediately follow present all the findings relevant to Crown Hill. The six tables that make comparisons with Crown Hill are then followed by a similar set for each of the other closure schools (Haller Lake, Jefferson, Maple Leaf, and Webster).

The format and content of Table 1 (Crown Hill) will be discussed in detail to explain the model that was used. Table 1-a is a comparison between Crown Hill and two non-deseg comparison school neighborhoods: Loyal Heights and Viewlands. The table indicates that 201 students (K-6) whose home addresses were within the Crown Hill boundary were enrolled in the Seattle Public Schools in May 1978, base year. Although most of these students probably were enrolled in Crown Hill, yet they may have been enrolled in other Seattle Public Schools. The number fell to 191 in April 1980, a drop of 5%, and still further to 169, a net drop (from the base year) of 16%.

Of course, after the school was closed, those students did not attend Crown Hill. These students, 191 in April 1980, and 169, in October 1980, were all the K-6 students enrolled in any Seattle Public School, and whose residence was within the 1978-79 Crown Hill boundary.

Loyal Heights began with a neighborhood K-6 enrollment of 242 at base year. This number fell to 207 for April 1980 (down 14%) and that figure remained at 207 (net loss of 14% from base year). Viewlands began the interval with 307 K-6 students enrolled within its boundaries, dropping to 304 at year one (down 1%), and to 257 in year two (16% down from the initial figure).

The chi-square test was applied to the enrollments showing $x^2 = 2.092$, with 4 degrees of freedom, not significant. The conclusion is that the Crown Hill neighborhood enrollments K-6, before and after closure, were essentially proportional to those experienced at Loyal Heights and Viewlands, non deseg school neighborhoods, before and after the Crown Hill closure.

Table 1-b shows the comparison, in the same format, of Crown Hill enrollments and percentage changes along with Broadview and Oak Lake's. These school neighborhoods were involved in desegregation. The comparison revealed a value of $X^2 = 0.498$ with 4 degrees of freedom, not significant.

Table 1/c shows a comparison of enrollments of the K-6 students living in the Crown Hill neighborhood compared with K-6 students in all the city schools. Chi-square was not significant ($x^2 = 0.52$, with 2 degrees of freedom).

Table 1-d, 1-e, and 1-f make the same comparisons as discussed above, except that all students K-12 were subjects for the comparisons.

Just as for the K-6 comparisons, Crown Hill's experience of K-12 student enrollment numbers was essentially no differenct from its non deseg comparisons, or from its deseg comparisons, or from the District at large.

DISTRICT-WIDE K-6 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 1-a					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
CROWN HILL	201	191	-5	169	-16
Comparison School Neighborhoods Non Deseg:					
LOYAL HEIGHTS	242	207	-14	207	-14
VIEWLANDS	307	304	-1	257	-16
$x^2 = 2.092$, 4 d.f., n.s.					
Table 1-b					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
CROWN HILL	201	191	-5	169	-16
Comparison School Neighborhoods Deseg:					
BROADVIEW	366	326	-11	304	-17
OAK LAKE	322	320	-1	293	-9
$x^2 = 1.284$, 4 d.f., n.s.					
Table 1-c					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
CROWN HILL	201	191	-5	169	-16
Seattle School District K-6	26,981	25,666	-4.9	24,257	-10.1
$x^2 = 0.52$, 2 d.f., n.s.					

DISTRICT-WIDE K-12 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
		Table 1-d			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
CROWN HILL	395	372	-6	345	-13
Comparison School Neighborhood Non Deseg:					
LOYAL HEIGHTS	481	428	-11	433	-10
VIEWLANDS	624	618	-1	571	-8
		x^2 = 1.953, 4 d.f., n.s.			
		Table 1-e			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
CROWN HILL	395	372	-6	345	-13
Comparison School Neighborhood Deseg:					
BROADVIEW	907	802	-12	733	-19
OAK LAKE	591	595	1	538	-9
		x^2 = 3.34, 4 d.f., n.s.			
		Table 1-f			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
CROWN HILL	395	372	-6	345	-13
Seattle School District K-12	52,545	49,993	-4.9	48,351	-8.0
		x^2 = 0.546, 2 d.f., n.s.			

DISTRICT-WIDE K-6 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
		Table 2-a			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
HALLER LAKE	252	212	-16	212	-16
Comparison School Neighborhood Non Deseg:					
PINEHURST	205	173	-16	175	-15
SACAJAWEA	208	187	-10	195	-6
		x^2 = 0.739, 4 d.f., n.s.			
		Table 2-b			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
HALLER LAKE	252	212	-16	212	-16
Comparison School Neighborhood Deseg:					
NORTHGATE	159	145	-8	127	-20
OLYMPIC HILLS	314	253	-19	226	-28
		x^2 = 2.310, 4 d.f., n.s.			
		Table 2-c			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
HALLER LAKE	252	212	-16	212	-16
Seattle School District K-6	26,981	25,666	-4.9	24,257	-10.1
		x^2 = 1.74, 2 d.f., n.s.			

DISTRICT-WIDE K-12 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
		Table 2-d			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
HALLER LAKE	560	488	-13	448	-20
Comparison School Neighborhood Non Deseg:					
PINEHURST	417	367	-12	358	-14
SACAJAWEA	435	387	-11	388	-11
		x^2 = 1.531, 4 d.f., n.s.			
		Table 2-e			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
HALLER LAKE	560	488	-13	448	-20
Comparison School Neighborhood Deseg:					
NORTHGATE	374	331	-11	294	-21
OLYMPIC HILLS	655	563	-14	555	-15
		x^2 = 1.37, 4 d.f., n.s.			
		Table 2-f			
Closure School Neighborhood:					
HALLER LAKE	560	488	-13	448	-20
Seattle School District K-12	52,545	49,993	-4.9	48,351	-8.0
		x^2 = 5.047, 2 d.f., n.s.			

DISTRICT-WIDE K-6 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 3-a					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
JEFFERSON	289	247	-15	255	-12
Comparison School Neighborhood Non Deseg:					
LAFAYETTE	489	489	0	418	-15
FAIRMOUNT PARK	269	299	11.2	296	10
$x^2 = 9.417$, 4 d.f. sig. at .05 level					
Table 3-b					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
JEFFERSON	289	247	-15	255	-12
Comparison School Neighborhood Deseg:					
GATEWOOD	389	306	-21	267	-31
SCHMITZ PARK	148	132	-11	129	-13
GENESEE HILL	252	220	-13	199	-21
$x^2 = 5.915$, 6 d.f., n.s.					
Table 3-c					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
JEFFERSON	289	247	-15	255	-12
Seattle School District K-6	26,981	25,666	-4.9	24,257	-10.1
$x^2 = 1.673$, 2 d.f., n.s.					

DISTRICT-WIDE K-12 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 3-d					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
JEFFERSON	581	522	-10	490	-16
Comparison School Neighborhood Non Deseg:					
LAFAYETTE	991	967	-2	884	-11
FAIRMOUNT PARK	476	485	1.9	487	2.3
$x^2 = 5.775$, 4 d.f., n.s.					
Table 3-e					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
JEFFERSON	581	522	-10	490	-16
Comparison School Neighborhood Deseg:					
GATEWOOD	790	674	-15	614	-22
SCHMITZ PARK	327	293	-10	262	-20
GENESEE HILL	510	449	-12	393	-23
$x^2 = 1.624$, 6 d.f., n.s.					
Table 3-f					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
JEFFERSON	581	522	-10	490	-16
Seattle School District K-12	52,545	49,993	-4.9	48,351	-8.0
$x^2 = 2.105$, 2 d.f., n.s.					

DISTRICT-WIDE K-6 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 4-a					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
MAPLE LEAF	276	246	-11	201	-27
Comparison School Neighborhood Non Deseg:					
SACAJAWEA	208	187	-10	195	-6
VIEW RIDGE	302	281	-7	279	-8
	$x^2 = 5.509$, 4 d.f., n.s.				
Table 4-b					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
MAPLE LEAF	276	246	-11	201	-27
Comparison School Neighborhood Deseg:					
ROGERS	310	264	-15	222	-28
WEDGWOOD	247	216	-13	177	-28
DECATUR	156	128	-18	124	-21
	$x^2 = 1.512$, 6 d.f., n.s.				
Table 4-c					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
MAPLE LEAF	276	246	-11	201	-27
Seattle School District K-6	26,981	25,666	-4.9	24,257	-10.1
	$x^2 = 5.221$, 2 d.f., n.s.				

DISTRICT-WIDE K-12 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 4-d					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
MAPLE LEAF	682	592	-13	503	-26
Comparison School Neighborhoods Non Deseg:					
SACAJAWEA	435	387	-11	388	-11
VIEW RIDGE	650	599	-8	588	-10
$x^2 = 7.897$, 4 d.f., n.s.					
Table 4-e					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
MAPLE LEAF	682	592	-13	503	-26
Comparison School Neighborhoods Deseg:					
ROGERS	684	630	-8	551	-19
WEDGWOOD	525	456	-13	392	-25
DECATUR	351	324	-8	292	-17
$x^2 = 2.421$, 6 d.f., n.s.					
Table 4-f					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
MAPLE LEAF	682	592	-13	503	-26
Seattle School District K-12	52,545	49,993	-4.9	48,351	-8.0
$x^2 = 14.06$, 2 d.f., significant at .001 level					

DISTRICT-WIDE K-6 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 5-a					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
WEBSTER	295	326	11	313	6
Comparison School Neighborhoods: Non Deseg:					
ADAMS	333	303	-9	280	-16
LOYAL HEIGHTS	242	207	-14	207	-14
	$x^2 = 6.862$, 4 d.f., n.s.				
Table 5-b					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
WEBSTER	295	326	11	313	6
Comparison School Neighborhoods Deseg:					
WEST WOODLAND	463	440	-5	407	-12
BROADVIEW	366	326	-11	304	-17
	$x^2 = 6.22$, 4 d.f., n.s.				
Table 5-c					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
WEBSTER	295	326	11	313	6
Seattle School District K-6	26,981	25,666	-4.9	24,257	-10.1
	$x^2 = 5.01$, 2 d.f., n.s.				

DISTRICT-WIDE K-6 ENROLLMENTS IN CLOSURE
AND COMPARISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

	1978-79	1979-80	% Change ('78 Base)	1980-81	% Change ('78 Base)
Table 5-d					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
WEBSTER	606	649	7	605	-0.2
Comparison School Neighborhoods Non Deseg:					
ADAMS	634	589	-7	569	-10
LOYAL HEIGHTS	481	428	-11	433	-10
$x^2 = 5.57$, 4 d.f., n.s.					
Table 5-e					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
WEBSTER	606	649	7	605	-0.2
Comparison School Neighborhoods Deseg:					
WEST WOODLAND	880	793	-10	731	-17
BROADVIEW	907	802	-12	733	-19
$x^2 = 11.024$, 4 d.f., significant at .05 level					
Table 5-f					
Closure School Neighborhood:					
WEBSTER	606	649	7	605	-0.2
Seattle School District K-12	52,545	49,993	-4.9	48,351	-8.0
$x^2 = 4.51$, 2 d.f., n.s.					

Conclusions

Comparisons of neighborhoods with Crown Hill and Haller Lake showed no significant differences in enrollment changes following the Crown Hill and Haller Lake closure.

The Jefferson comparisons likewise revealed no significant differences in enrollment changes among the comparison neighborhoods. However, the chi-square value (x^2 = 9.417) at the K-6 comparison with non deseg schools, was quite high. A similar high value (x^2 = 5.775) was found in the K-12 comparison. Contributing to this was growth of student numbers, both K-6 and K-12, in the Fairmount Park neighborhood.

Maple Leaf neighborhood comparisons revealed no significant differences in enrollment changes. However, Maple Leaf K-6 and K-12 enrollments, when compared with non-deseg school neighborhoods, showed rather high values of $x^2 = 5.509$ for K-6 and $x^2 = 7.897$ for K-12. Clearly, Maple Leaf was declining faster than its non-deseg comparison school neighborhoods. However, when compared with deseg schools, x^2 had a lower value. Maple Leaf was declining at a rate more consonant with its deseg school comparison neighborhoods.

When Maple Leaf was compared with the Seattle School District K-12, a value of $x^2 = 14.06$, significant at the .001 level, was found. It is believed that the K-12 city-wide data revealed significance where K-6 data did not. This may have been due to the change in feeder table assignment for students in grades 7-12 who, as a result of the Maple Leaf closure, were assigned to Garfield and Eckstein.

Webster's enrollments did not show significant statistical differences from its non-deseg comparison neighborhoods. Analysis did show high values of x^2, however. Webster, K-6, unlike its comparison neighborhoods, gained students after closure, and gained students during the first year, K-12. Webster was significantly different from its deseg school comparisons, K-12, due to its own growth while its deseg school comparison neighborhood numbers were declining.

Jefferson's K-6 comparison with non-deseg neighborhoods showed significance at the .05 level. Contributing to this difference was Fairmount Park's growth of 10% during the period when Lafayette and Jefferson were declining 15% and 12%, respectively. Significance was not found when K-12 enrollments were compared in those neighborhoods.

The data presented here show that school enrollments in many areas have been declining. Many forces cause enrollments to decrease. It is difficult to isolate the effects of closure from other social forces which may contribute to enrollment decline. No substantial evidence was found in this study to indicate that school closure necessarily causes enrollment decline.